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ALBANIAN JUSTICE SECTOR STRENGTHENING PROJECT (JuST)



QUARTERLY REPORT (October – December 2014)

USAID / ALBANIA, DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE OFFICE

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On the cover: Judge Truman A. Morrison discusses active case management with judicial leaders at the annual Court Leadership Conference on December 19, 2014.

Introduction

Chemonics International is pleased to present its fifteenth quarterly report describing the activities of the Albanian Justice Sector Strengthening Project (JuST). Throughout the quarter, public attention was focused on justice sector reform, an objective identified as one of the highest priorities for the Government. JuST is pleased to note that several areas of assistance, such as digital audio recording of court proceedings, and greater court efficiencies through “active case management” have been held up as models of progress. Now in its fifth and final year, JuST is concentrating its efforts on ensuring that all areas of assistance will be carried forward in a sustainable manner after the close of the project.

Highlights and Deliverables Completed this Quarter

- Convened fourth National Court Leadership Conference in Tirana, to highlight the results of active case management practices as implemented in two demonstration courts.
- Digital audio recording was extended to the Puka District Court.
- The number of court hearings recorded reached 81% among courts that have the technology installed.
- The independent media venue, www.investigim.al, is thriving and has broadened its reach in Albania and throughout the region.
- Continuing Legal Education is being expanded to a total of six regional chambers plus the National School of Advocates.
- The Donor Coordination Group, initiated and hosted by JuST, continues to meet quarterly and produce a widely-circulated bulletin, *Connections*, on justice sector projects.

Technical Activities by Project Component

JuST works in three strategic areas. First, working with justice sector institutions, it aims to increase court transparency, fairness, and efficiency – a key requirement for eventual EU accession. Second, working with civil society organizations and the media, it seeks to promote accountability from the “grass roots” level by bolstering their watchdog and anticorruption roles. Third, recognizing the importance of well-trained professionals, it is working to strengthen the legal profession and legal education. The project is part of ongoing U.S. support to the rule of law and good governance in Albania, with an emphasis on improving justice delivery and increasing public demand for accountability in the justice sector. The following describes the specific activities initiated or completed during the first quarter of the fifth year of this five-year project.

Component One – Increased Court Transparency, Fairness, and Efficiency

The first component of JuST is focused on court operations through a number of strategies designed to address the lack of transparency and organizational deficiencies which impede the ability of the Albanian judiciary to implement meaningful reform. Intervention results include: a) more accurate trial records; b) more efficiently-run courts that are more open to the public; and c) reduced case backlogs.

JuST is advancing these objectives through direct support to the courts in establishing systems for producing and making available verbatim records of legal proceedings; technical assistance to promote greater use of public courtrooms for the public benefit; better court management practices; and assistance to selected pilot courts to introduce and expand the use of mediation for resolving commercial and family law disputes.

More Accurate Trial Records through Digital Audio Recording

JuST is continuing its steady progress in equipping all Albanian courtrooms with digital audio recording technology. Frequently cited by top officials as a measure of Albania's progress toward meeting EU standards on the rule of law, this initiative continues to receive broad support among justice sector leaders. For the remainder of the project, JuST will work to ensure that it leaves a sustainable legacy through technology enhancements, management supervision tools, and support for end users.

On the technology side, JuST advanced plans to establish a nationwide central archive for audio recording files from all courts. This final step will offer a much higher level of data security and will permit online access to relevant audio records without the need to produce physical CDs. On the management side, JuST has followed a strategy of developing computer-generated reports that clearly depict implementation successes and problems. JuST staff has trained judicial inspectors on these reports, and all courts are now aware of the fact that their use of audio recording technology is being monitored. As a result, in courts with installed equipment, 81% of all cases are being recorded, and the trend is upward. JuST is also mindful of the importance of end-user feedback, and plans to improve the interface between the audio recording software and the case management system. JuST is also working to develop guidelines on the level of detail that should be included in case summaries – an important issue for court secretaries.

Improved Court Management Leading to More Transparent and Efficient Court Operations including Court Hearings that are More Open to the Public

During the first two years of the project, JuST efforts to improve court management and promote more efficient court operations were focused on Albania's two largest courts – the District Courts of Tirana and Durres. A courtroom usage study was conducted and eventually recommendations emerging from the study were implemented. Nevertheless, the serious shortage of courtrooms in both courts limited the impact of the changes.

During Year 4, JuST modified its approach to address the chronic problem of court delay and inefficient case processing procedures. Working jointly with the OSCE Justice Project, JuST engaged a selected court willing to implement recommendations contained in OSCE's court monitoring study, "Towards Justice." The all-women Kruja District Court was selected as the first demonstration court to implement the basic principles of active case management. Their efforts produced immediate, measurable results. Given the success of this first demonstration court, JuST and OSCE, in consultation with institutional stakeholders and partners, selected the much larger Korca District Court for a second demonstration. Early results from Korca have been equally impressive.

Through this initiative, judges have been encouraged to take control of their calendars and apply proven, common-sense principles to their work. These principles include keeping continuances to a minimum; insisting on firm trial dates; and conveying clear expectations of what is required of lawyers, prosecutors, parties, and state institutions. By acting in a unified manner, they have achieved remarkable success almost overnight. The average number of hearings to resolve a civil case has plummeted from 13 to 4. The number of hearings to conclude a criminal case has dropped from eight to three. Judges are handling more than twice as many cases now as they did previously. Not surprisingly given these favorable results, the President of the Republic has publicly described this USAID initiative as a model which should be adopted in all courts of Albania.

During the quarter, JuST's Annual Court Leadership Conference brought together the chief judges of all courts in Albania and focused exclusively on active case management principles,

and the remarkable results that have been achieved. Moderating the discussion was Senior D.C. Superior Court Judge Truman A. Morrison, who has worked intensively with the judges of the two courts to encourage them to take control of the court process. In addition to the chief judges, the entire trial benches of the two demonstration courts attended the conference and shared their experiences.

The conference was structured around the idea of practical problem-solving in managing court caseloads. This is not an idea that comes naturally to many judges, many of whom look to the procedure code for guidance on all matters and are reluctant to do anything not explicitly authorized in the code. Such a narrow approach can lead to absurd results. One of the messages that Judge Morrison and the JuST/OSCE team have repeatedly stressed is the notion that no procedure code – no matter how carefully drafted – can possibly cover all situations that may come up in the courtroom. Therefore, the operating principle should be that unless a particular measure is specifically *prohibited* by the code, it should be *permitted*, as long as it makes sense and serves the administration of justice. Through close engagement with project staff, judges of both courts have internalized and applied this approach and have managed to change the legal culture in their courtrooms in a very short time and with remarkably promising results.

As the discussions progressed throughout the conference, it became clear to all that this “active case management” idea is a “win-win” for all involved. The Chief Judicial Inspector for the High Council of Justice noted that complaints against judges have dropped in these two courts. Representatives from state institutions are pleased that they no longer need to appear repeatedly in court simply because someone else is absent. In Korca, the judges – on their own initiative – organized special trainings for postal employees in order to orient them to the court’s needs in serving notices. Most importantly, the citizens themselves find their cases resolved much more quickly, and are slowly gaining a measure of trust in their court system.

Before the conference was over, a number of courts – including the Tirana District Court which has jurisdiction over 70% of all cases in Albania – were requesting JuST Project assistance to launch similar initiatives. While JuST will be unable to fulfill these requests, JuST’s partner, OSCE, has pledged to continue working in this area.

Reflecting on their accomplishments after the conference, Judge Morrison stated that *“I frankly thought as I left first the Kruja retreat and then the Korca retreat that while they had many good ideas and were learning to collaborate with each other about ways of doing things, it was going to take them quite a while to figure out how to execute these ideas. Much to my surprise, they began to execute very quickly. I began to get reports about their statistics. Then on this visit, I’ve seen proof from talking with them that they have made amazing progress. In my view, it is remarkable that these judges, in this country, where there is a tradition of judges ‘butting out’ and letting the lawyers and the parties and everybody else run the show with regard to litigation – that these judges have acclimatized themselves to new ways of thinking with just amazing speed.”*

In a related activity to spread knowledge of these new practices with appellate court judges, Judge Morrison wrote a paper on active case management and the appellate review process. The paper was circulated in advance, and roundtable discussions were organized with appellate judges in Korca and Tirana. Since judges in both Kruja and Korca are employing new practices in the management of their workloads, JuST and OSCE deemed it important to inform the appellate review process about the objectives and results of the initiative, and the fact that the new practices are in no way inconsistent with the existing procedural codes.

Reduced Case Backlogs through Implementation of Mediation

Reducing case backlogs is an important objective in building trust in the judicial system. Besides the active case management techniques described above, JuST is also working on alternate dispute resolution techniques – namely mediation. Mediation, when successfully implemented, brings multiple advantages to the court system, including reduced costs to courts. Furthermore, parties that work out their differences together, in the context of mediation, are likely to be more satisfied with the outcome. Mediation also tends to be a much quicker process than traditional litigation. For these reasons, USAID has actively supported the development of mediation in Albania.

JuST support for mediation has taken several forms over the life of the project. Most recently, JuST has sought to strengthen the National Chamber of Mediators through a variety of mechanisms, including capacity building, support for an office, bringing in a European mediation expert to conduct “training of trainers” (ToT), and financial support to maintain the court-connected mediation programs in Durres and Korca. The number of individuals trained in mediation techniques expanded by 34 during the last quarter, as the Chamber took advantage of the ToT program previously offered and conducted specialized courses. On the other hand, the number of cases mediated continues to drop. In Durres, where there is a long history of successful court-based mediation, the program is not functioning. The Durres District Court Chief Judge reports that there is no reluctance among judges to refer cases to mediation. Although there is a support agreement in place between the Chamber and JuST, the Chamber has simply not shown the leadership necessary to revitalize and nurture what had once been a successful program. In Korca, the mediation office is functioning, and has received 21 cases, of which five have been successfully resolved to date. Perhaps symptomatic of what ails the mediation profession is the fact that the internal leadership dispute did not prove amenable to mediation, and is now in litigation in the Tirana District Court.

Challenges Ahead for Component One

As noted above, leadership deficiencies and internal conflicts continue to impede the growth and development of the National Chamber of Mediators.

One challenge facing JuST, more administrative than technical, is the deployment of the central server for audio recordings. With numerous Albanian institutions involved, and various levels of approval required, we have experienced delays in the installation of the hardware. A related concern is the planned enhancement to ICMIS which will permit better integration of data between audio recording and case management systems, and easier generation of management reports. Again, with central institutions, their IT subcontractors, and local courts all involved, some bureaucratic delay is likely.

Component Two – Strengthened Civic Engagement to Help Stem Governmental and Justice Sector Corruption

The second JuST component is designed to increase the organizational capacity of CSOs, promote stronger and more effective civic participation, increase public awareness of corruption, and bolster the role of media in investigating and reporting corruption cases. A small grants program serves to strengthen NGOs and promote activities to expose corruption and hold public institutions accountable. Close oversight by JuST and frequent visits to the field to participate in activities organized by grantees have contributed to successful implementation of the grants program.

Capacity Development for Professional Organizations

Union of Albanian Judges (UAJ)

Throughout the duration of the project, JuST has worked to strengthen the institutional and technical capabilities of the UAJ. Beginning with support for the development of a five year strategic plan, JuST has assisted the UAJ at critical points in its development. With the membership having grown to include more than half of all Albanian judges, and with a well-established administrative support component, the UAJ has shown itself to be well qualified to take on other projects from international donor organizations and to be a credible voice of the judiciary on justice-sector reform initiatives.

Immediately prior to the close of the previous quarter, the UAJ convened its General Assembly. Leadership positions were contested resulting in leadership changes. As a mark of maturity of the organization, the transition to the new board was smooth and harmonious. The new leadership, chaired by Tirana District Court Judge Gerd Hoxha, moved quickly to retain the organization's administrative staff member, and continue ongoing projects of the UAJ. One example was the completion of a project funded through a JuST small grant to produce three bench books, or practical guides for judges on civil trials, criminal trials, and judicial ethics.

During the quarter, the three bench books were finalized and printed. A launching event for the three publications was held at the Tirana International Hotel. The event was well attended by judges, representatives of justice institutions, law schools, the School of Magistrates, international donors and the media.

This quarter marks the final milestone in JuST assistance to the UAJ. From a weak and disorganized group of judges, the UAJ now has a growing membership and consistent revenues. It has successfully completed two projects funded by the Soros Foundation, one on access to justice in civil cases and another on constitutional reform. It has run an internship program for law students from Luarasi University. A portion of member consultant fees earned through such projects goes into the UAJ budget as a mechanism for sustainability. As noted in previous reports, the UAJ is a full voting member of the International Association of Judges, and as such, part of a larger community of judges working for greater independence within their respective countries.

Justice and Good Governance CSO Grants Program

An important element of the USAID's assistance to Albania is strengthening civil society with the objective of increasing citizen participation and achieving greater transparency and accountability from governmental institutions. Currently, \$487,077 out of \$500,000 or 97.4% of the total budget available for grants has been committed. Two new grants coming from a coalition were awarded during this quarter to Eye of the New Media in partnership with the Association of Journalists for Justice. In addition, three ongoing grants continued their planned activities during the quarter as described below.

Eye of the New Media (SMR) in partnership with the Association of Journalists for Justice (AJJ) is implementing a project designed to promote greater citizen participation in tackling corruption in local government institutions responsible for delivering social services. The focus of activities for this grant is the Vlorë and Fier regions. During the quarter, SMR organized a series of meetings with local social administrators, chiefs of finance, mayors and other representatives of 14 local government units (LGUs) to discuss the proposed 2015 budget and to identify the problems related to delivering social services at the local level.

Following awareness-raising meetings and trainings held previously, social service administrators in the target LGUs have made a practice of posting monthly the list of eligible beneficiaries of economic aid, bringing unprecedented levels of transparency at the local level.

The activities of SMR, and the exposure of abuses by the AJJ, are succeeding in bringing legally-authorized assistance to their intended beneficiaries. For example, the law includes a compensation fund for families too poor to pay their electricity bill. In some LGUs, no benefits had been paid for three to five years. In other LGUs, eligible recipients of economic aid were systematically excluded so that local administrators could direct public benefits to ineligible citizens, friends and families. Following the exposure of these abuses, and the monthly publication of beneficiary lists, 230 ineligible families have been removed from the assistance rolls by regional state social service administrators. Furthermore 37 new and eligible families have been added to the list after receiving help in the application process. They are currently receiving the benefits to which they are legally entitled.

Discrimination against Roma families was particularly acute. In the Qëndër Fier commune, 100 Roma people were assisted in qualifying for health benefits. Crediting the project, the local administrator of Qëndër Fier commune, Fatbardha Prifti, stated that, *“the problem with the Roma families was resolved after a series of efforts undertaken by the commune and State Social Service Office, but the intervention of the project staff and the investigative journalist, who made the problem public and shook the indifference of the local state institutions, played an important role in this regard.”*

As SMR was working to ensure that eligible public welfare recipients were receiving the assistance to which they are entitled, the investigative journalists were active in exposing many of the bad practices occurring at the local level. AJJ published nine articles (three features and six full investigative reports) while three more articles are being finalized. The journalists were part of the meetings with the beneficiaries where they interviewed four local officials, nine representatives of the regional directorates and 18 community members in order to gather appropriate data for their stories. The articles published at the investigative page www.investigim.al contributed to raising public awareness, increasing institutional responsiveness, and improving their performance on tackling different problems in the social services sector.

Association of Journalists for Justice. In November, the AJJ completed a 12-month project focusing on corruption and disparities in justice system decision making in the institutions of the police, the prosecution, and the courts in both Tirana and Durrës. The project involved building an extensive database of cases and individuals to determine if certain classes of suspects or defendants received preferential treatment.

The database consisted of a sample of 100 cases involving the criminal charges of theft and illegal weapons possession. By systematically monitoring these cases, the journalists were able to add data from the institutions of the police, prosecution and courts. Among the findings was the fact that fully 20% of the cases brought by the police were never filed by the prosecution office in the court. Journalists associated with the project wrote five investigative stories as well as two investigative video documentaries from information acquired during the course of the project.

A final report was prepared gathering together all the findings from the study. A roundtable was organized on November 25 to present and discuss the findings. In attendance were representatives from the three justice institutions which were the focus of the project, along with judges, lawyers, and students from the Faculties of Journalism in Tirana and Elbasan. Lively discussion ensued, highlighting problems revealed by the project. One problem involved double standards in

sentencing from varying appellate court decisions. Another problem related to the difficulties resulting from institutions maintaining separate case files. As one roundtable participant and criminal defense attorney, Mr. Eduard Mullaraj, observed, *“The justice system needs to exert its role from the very first moment of crime scene investigation and acquisition of evidence. It is the judicial police officer’s duty to open the files and prepare the materials and pieces of evidence that he/she then sends to the prosecutor... This whole mechanism leaves behind many aspects; however, the prosecution office must prepare the case files, even though part of the information is missing, and even though they must send the information to the court within a certain period.”* One of the outcomes of the roundtable was the recognition expressed by all participants that there must be greater cooperation among these institutions. There was also recognition for the important role played by investigative journalists in reporting cases of system malfunction or outright corruption. The Final Report of the Project was disseminated to the judicial institutions electronically, and was recently published on their websites.

Center for Legal Civic Initiatives (CLCI) is continuing to implement a 10-month project supporting the third component of JuST – strengthening legal education. Working with the Legal Clinic at the University of Tirana Law Faculty, CLCI is ensuring that legal clinic students have a steady stream of real clients presenting real legal problems. This provides the kind of practical, hands-on experience that students expect when they enroll in this year-long program. Additional information on the work of CLCI can be found in the next section of the report.

Justice Reporting Fellows

During the reporting period, JuST continued to provide technical assistance to the AJJ. JuST has supported an upgrade of the independent investigative website, www.investigim.al. AJJ is running internship programs with journalism students from Tirana, Fier and Elbasan Journalism Faculties. As a result of this support, students are gaining experience under the mentorship of AJJ members and have reported and published four breaking news stories on the website. In addition, as a result of the training of trainers (ToT) program recently offered by JuST, a group of journalists has organized training programs on investigative techniques for 13 journalism students.

As a result of the close collaboration between AJJ and the Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP), AJJ has become a full-fledged member of the OCCRP and looks forward to more regional cooperation on corruption investigations. To provide additional training for justice reporting fellows, JuST has organized a study tour for a group of journalists to the Sarajevo Investigative Center, part of the OCCRP. Through this network, AJJ members are involved in several ongoing regional investigations on the detention system, banking system, environment, and abuses carried out by former secret agents following the collapse of communism.

AJJ has demonstrated its enhanced capacities in writing project proposals and implementing grant-funded activities. These newly-acquired capabilities, coupled with its rising profile among similar associations in the region, will increase the likelihood of sustainability post-JuST. For example, since August the Association has been implementing a 10-month anti-corruption project funded by the American Embassy in Tirana, entitled “Tell Your Story! Public Institution Fraud and Corruption Must End”. In another example, the Open Society Foundation for Albania (OSFA) recently awarded a \$9000 grant to AJJ for an eight month project entitled, “Denouncing Public Funds Abuses”. The project seeks to encourage citizens to denounce cases of corruption, bribery, misuse of public funds and abuse of power by institutions.

The Independent Venue for Investigative Journalists

The strength and vitality of the independent venue for investigative journalists, www.investigim.al, continues to gain momentum as measured by the number and quality of published articles, and the growing number of page views for the website. During the quarter, 41 articles were published, including 17 blog postings, 22 investigative articles and two video stories. Of these, 11 represented voluntary contributions by the journalists. As noted in previous reports, articles first published on www.investigim.al are often re-published by other media outlets.

The viewership of the investigative website reached 3,022 page views of which 70.1% were new visitors and 29.9% returning visitors. Broken down by location, 61.47% of viewers were from Albania, with the remainder from neighboring countries such as Italy, Greece, Kosovo, and even the United States. The official Facebook page of the venue is regularly updated with new postings and has so far received 3,290 “likes”.

Challenges Ahead for Component 2

Despite the organizational growth of the UAJ, the goal of a strong and unified voice of the judiciary may have suffered a setback. During the quarter, the long-moribund rival judicial association decided to reconstitute itself, electing a new board of directors and offering itself as an alternative to the Union. The reasons for this move are not clear. It remains to be seen if this alternative judicial association will gain members and influence, but it is difficult to see how two competing associations of judges can advance the goal of an independent judiciary. Rightly or wrongly, rival judicial organizations are perceived by the public to exist for the purpose of promoting the interests of rival political parties. The challenge for the judiciary is to somehow find a way to rise above politics.

Component Three – Strengthened Legal Profession

The third JuST component is designed to enhance the legal competence and professionalism among practicing lawyers, and to reinforce practical skills among law graduates in the country. To achieve these objectives, the project works closely with the National Chamber of Advocates (NCA) to sustain its Continuing Legal Education (CLE) program for lawyers. The project also works with the University of Tirana Law Faculty (UTLF) to promote clinical legal education intended to offer practical skills to aspiring lawyers.

Develop and implement Continued Legal Education (CLE) program

From the beginning of the project, JuST has focused assistance on establishing the CLE program as a means raising the level of competence and professionalism among practicing lawyers. During the first four years of the project, considerable effort was devoted to assisting the NCA in establishing a CLE program for lawyers and assistant lawyers in three regional chambers, and making CLE mandatory. These joint JuST/NCA efforts came to fruition when amendments to the Law on the Legal Profession were enacted. The new law not only made CLE mandatory for all lawyers, but also established National School of Advocates (NSA). JuST then supported NCA in developing an action plan to implement the requirements of the new law.

During the quarter, the third year of CLE got underway, now aimed primarily at licensed attorneys rather than assistant lawyers. Legal education for assistant lawyers is being provided by the fully-operational NSA. The CLE program has now been expanded to six regional chambers with the additional of chambers in Korca, Shkoder and Tirana. With the progressive cost-sharing mechanism agreed upon between USAID and NCA at the beginning of the CLE Program, the

NCA is now covering more than 70% of the costs. During this quarter, the training curricula and calendars were drafted and approved, and courses have already begun in Durres and Vlora for the third year in a row, and in Fier for the second year. Korca has launched CLE for the first time and includes lawyers from nearby Pogradec. Courses will soon start in Shkoder and Tirana. Lawyers from other chambers are encouraged to join the program in the nearest chamber. Attendance of the first courses was exceptionally high showing an increasing demand for such trainings. On a parallel track, during this reporting period the NSA started its second year of initial trainings to assistant lawyers from all over Albania. The number of assistant lawyers registered with the NSA this year is 600, a substantial increase over first year enrollment figures of 250 students. The rapid expansion of legal education for practicing lawyers far exceeds expectations at the beginning of JuST.

Going forward, JuST will continue support for the third year of the CLE program in six regional chambers of advocates, and will assist NSA with developing a strategy for organizing the 4th year of CLE through the NSA.

Establish a Bar Journal with the National Chamber of Advocates to publish regularly

USAID support to the NCA also includes assistance for establishing a bar journal (*Avokatia*) as part of the broader effort to raise the professional standards and instill a sense of pride among practicing lawyers. The journal aims at fostering professional debate among the Albanian legal community, with special focus on engaging practicing attorneys in legal research and writing. Set up as a quarterly publication of the NCA, *Avokatia* is now a respected legal periodical. During this quarter the twelfth issue of the journal was published. Some of the articles from this issue may be found on the website designed with JuST support: <http://avokatia.al/revista/avokatia-12-2>. Work is underway for the preparation and regular publication (in January) of the thirteenth issue, demonstrating a sustained capacity by the NCA to ensure a periodical publication going forward.

Aiming at increased publicity of the journal among lawyers and legal professionals, during the quarter, *Avokatia* opened a Facebook page. The page includes alerts on new issues of the Journal, highlights on selected articles published at www.avokatia.al, and provides answers to questions about obtaining a copy or becoming a contributor. It already has almost 2000 followers. While JuST assisted the NCA with different cost elements for the first six issues of the journal, the *Avokatia* is now financially self-sustainable. Publication of the thirteenth issue in January will mark the start of the fourth year of publication of the journal.

Clinical Legal Education Program

Since the beginning of the project, JuST has been assisting UTLF in establishing a clinical legal education program, designed to provide students with practical skills in handling real cases, always under proper supervision.

Year 4 saw significant steps in getting the law school's Legal Clinic off the ground and involving students in trial preparation. Year 5 began with the organization of the Legal Clinic Presentation Ceremony in November, corresponding to the Legal Clinic's first anniversary. The ceremony, supported by JuST, featured addresses by the USAID Mission Director, the Minister of Justice, and the Rector of the University of Tirana. Scheduled to coincide with activities celebrating the 60th anniversary of the Law School at the beginning of the academic year, the event received extensive media coverage, which further increased awareness among students about the Legal Clinic.

Following the ceremony, there was an increase in the number of students selecting Legal Clinic courses. So far, 74 students have enrolled. This year, for the first time, a group of 29 Legal Clinic students under the Civil Law Department was formed. These students, together with the Civil

Law Legal Clinic Professors have provided legal assistance to actual clients and organized informational sessions and mock trials for the first time for this department. The remaining 45 students have selected Legal Clinic courses under the Criminal Law Department. Due to delays with opening of the Masters' Programs under the Public Law Department, this department's group will be formed in January. In the meantime, the Criminal Law Department decided to provide Masters' students with an opportunity to register as interns at the Legal Clinic provided that they assist with awareness on the Legal Clinic and find cases/clients themselves. So far, 60 students from this department have signed up to serve as interns at the Clinic.

The number of cases attended by the Clinic during this quarter also increased. The Clinic provided free legal aid to 20 new cases, with 13 of them being referred by the local legal aid provider, CLCI, and another seven walk-in clients. Groups of students, in pairs, interviewed actual clients, and work is underway for the preparation of legal opinions, court documents and other requests or documents as needed for these cases. The Legal Clinic has begun to operate as a free legal aid provider, addressing a variety of legal issues including dissolution of marriage, determination of alimony, property disputes, court protection orders in domestic violence cases, and work-related disputes. In order to increase the number of students taking part in trial preparation, the CLCI in cooperation with the UTLF, launched an open call to students to engage as volunteers at the Center, working with their lawyers in providing assistance to the Center's clients. So far, 32 students have enrolled in this JuST-supported program.

JuST will continue to work closely with the UTLF to assist them with a sustainability strategy, and with the organization of practice-oriented trainings, Legal Clinic open days, and an academic conference on legal clinical education.

Professional Internship Program for Law School Students at the State Advocate's Office

The JuST-supported Professional Internship Program for Law School Students at the State Advocate's Office was completed successfully. In October, JuST supported the organization of the certificates award ceremony. The ceremony, held at the Ministry of Justice, was addressed by the Minister of Justice, Minister of Social Welfare and Youth, UTLF Dean and State Advocate. The event was successful and had great media coverage. From the initial group of 21 students, 18 of them attended the entire six months program showing great commitment and a high spirit of volunteerism. JuST recognized the successful interns with a token of appreciation at the end of their internship.

Challenges Ahead for Component Three

The kickoff of the UTFL Legal Clinic in Year 4 and its good start in its second year of existence are promising in terms of a viable legal clinic program. Despite positive results, the clinical program still needs strengthening. A number of challenges need to be overcome including, ensuring that professors are appropriately motivated to make a long term professional investment to the clinic and cooperation/case referral mechanisms with legal aid providers and institutions.

Quarterly Accrual Worksheet

Partner/Vendor: Chemonics International
 Contact: Nitara Layton/Sarah Byrne
 Phone: 202-955-6563/202-524-7682
 Fax: 202-955-7540

As of: Q1/2015

Contract/Agreement No. **182-C00-10-00105-00**

Project/Activity Name **Albanian Justice Sector Strengthening Project**

Agreement Start Date: 10/1/2010
 Agreement End Date: 9/30/2015

Agreement Ceiling:	\$	9,750,298.00
Obligated Amount:	\$	9,105,090.00
Ceiling Remaining:	\$	645,208.00

Total Disbursed:	\$	7,666,448.97	(per Phoenix)
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Last Payment Amount:	\$129,915.36	(per Phoenix)
For the Period:	Oct-14	

Unliquidated Balance:	\$	1,438,641.03
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Last Invoice, not yet disbursed:

Invoice No.	61793
For the Period:	Nov-14

Calculation:	October	\$	129,915.36	(Inv. No.: 061703)
	November	\$	141,677.49	(Inv. No.: 061793)
	December	\$	489,878.67	(estimate)
	Total	\$	761,471.52	(estimate for October-December 2014)

Accrual amount:	\$	761,471.52
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Est.Pipeline Amount:	\$	807,085
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